

REMARKS/DISCUSSION:

This Amendment A is being filed within three months after the shortened statutory period for response that ended on July 17, 2003. Accordingly, a Petition for a Three-Month Extension of Time is attached hereto.

Applicant has carefully studied the outstanding Office Action. This Amendment is intended to be fully responsive to all points of rejection raised by the Examiner and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-17 were pending in the application. Claim 8 has been canceled without prejudice to the Applicants. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-7 and 9-17 will be pending.

Amendments

Claims 1, 4, 9 and 13 have been amended to more clearly claim the relationship of the clamp pad to the engaging surface and holes of the clamp arm. In view of the amendments and discussion below, Applicants request reconsideration of the current rejections.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 8 has been rejected for failure of providing an antecedent basis for "said clamp arm". Claim 8 has been canceled.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claim 8 has been rejected in view of U.S. Patent no. 5,322,055 to Davison et al. Claim 8 has been canceled.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-6, 9-11 and 13-15 have been rejected over Smith et al. in view of Tovey et al. Claims 1, 9 and 13 have been amended to recite a clamp pad having a surface supported by the at least one engaging surface to more clearly define the relationship of the clamp pad in relationship to the top and

bottom surface, including the holes and engaging surface(s) of the clamp arm. Neither Smith nor Tovey disclose or suggest the a hole and engaging surface for supporting a surface of the clamp pad.

Claims 7, 12, 16 and 17 have been rejected over Smith et al. in view of Howell et al. and Fogarty et al. Claims 7, 12, 16 and 17 are dependent upon amended independent claims, and therefore are patentable over the cited art.

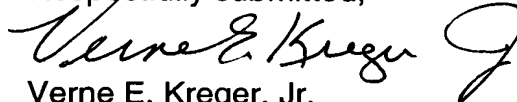
Conclusion

Applicant submits that in view of the amendments and discussion, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 112, 102 and 103 have been overcome and that the invention is now patentable over the cited prior. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider all rejections and pass this case to issue.

Should any minor points remain prior to issuance of a Notice of Allowance, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees, which may be required to Account No. 10-0750/END-805/VEK. This Authorization is being submitted in triplicate.

Respectfully submitted,



Verne E. Kreger, Jr.
Attorney for the Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 35,231

Johnson & Johnson
One Johnson & Johnson Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08933-7003
513 337-3295
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